DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 208 IR 009 241

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TITLE Faculty Status and Theological Librarians.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 27p.; Report presented at Drexel University and to the Committee on Standards of Accreditation of the American Theological Library Association.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Librarians; Library Surveys; *Professional Recognition; Qualifications; *Special Libraries; Tables (Data)
IDENTIFIERS American Theological Library Association; *Theological Libraries

ABSTRACT

Findings of this study confirm that head librarians at theological libraries dominate the profession in terms of qualifications for and characteristics of faculty status, and that the possession of appropriate individual qualifications tends to be accompanied by faculty status. The status of the individual was the unit of analysis for completed questionnaires representing 65 percent of the members of the American Theological Library Association. For each librarian, faculty rank, such qualifications as professional degrees, and such characteristics as tenure were determined and analyzed. Among head librarians, half had published, as opposed to 14 percent for all others, and 77 percent held faculty rank. No librarians with all 14 of the qualifications for faculty status used as variables for the study had less than seven of the eight characteristics used to operationalize the concept of having faculty status. (RAA)

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FACULTY STATUS AND THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIANS

by

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FACULTY STATUS AND THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIANS

General Background

Faculty status for academic librarians has been a widely discussed issue in recent years. Among theological librarians the issue has been a delicate and less visible one, owing primarily to the financial plight of many seminaries.[1] "The overall status picture in theological libraries, including both present conditions and librarians' views about desirable future developments, has not yet been systematically investigated."[2] This lack of investigation provided initial impetus for the research behind this paper.

The American Theological Library Association (ATLA) did vote in 1974 to endorse the Joint Statement on Faculty Status drafted by a committee of the Association of College and Research Libraries, the American Association of University Professors, and the Association of American Colleges.[3] The ATLA at the same time took steps to "secure a more uniform

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[1]Interview with David Wartluft, ATLA Executive Secretary, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 4 December 1975.

[2]Barbara Marjorie Griffis, "A Proposed Role for ATLA: A Study of Faculty Status for Theological Librarians," in American Theological Library Association, Summary of Proceedings, Twenty-seventh Annual Conference (Philadelphia: ATLA, 1973), p. 85; Norman J. Kansfield, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan to James C. Pakala, 30 January 1978; interview with Stephen L. Peterson, Library of the Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, 10 December 1980.

[3]Association of College and Research Libraries, "Membership Endorses Joint Statement on Faculty Status," College and Research Libraries News, no. 8 (September 1972), pp. 210-212.

interpretation of the qualifications required of a professional librarian within the libraries served by ATLA." ATLA in 1974 also decided to insist that the Association of Theological Schools

> incorporate within whatever statement of standards it endorses a provision that qualified professional librarians be considered full members of the faculties of member institutions with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of other faculty members except that individual institutions may establish such differences in work-hour provisions, vacation schedules, requirements for promotion, and lengths of service in particular ranks before promotion as shall be consonant with institutional requirements and differences in the duties of librarians and classroom instructors.[4]

The Board of Directors of ATLA referred this matter to the Committee on Standards of Accreditation for further development. As of 1980 the Committee continues its work. However, the ATLA Board may disband the Committee in 1981. The Association of Theological Schools will be rewriting its standards for accreditation within the next few years, and one or more theological librarians may well serve among those charged with responsibility for the process of rewriting those standards.[5]

All of these developments provided further impetus for the present research, the results of which are now being used by the ATLA's Committee on Standards of Accreditation. Action by ATLA on faculty status and specifically on uniform interpretation of professional qualifications is expected during 1981.[6]

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[4]American Theological Library Association, Summary of Proceedings, Twenty-eighth Annual Conference (Philadelphia: ATLA, 1974), p. 17.

[5]Interview with Stephen L. Peterson, 10 December 1980.

[6]Ibid.

The Aim of the Research

The research behind this paper was begun in January 1978 in conjunction with a course project done at Drexel University. From an earlier literature search two hypotheses had emerged. These were confirmed all along by contacts with fellow members of ATLA, but the hypotheses needed testing. The project served to test these two hypotheses as well as to expand the perimeter of knowledge about faculty status among theological librarians.

The first hypothesis was that head librarians dominate the profession in terms of qualifications and characteristics of faculty status. Contributing to the formulation of this hypothesis were the following: 1) head librarians seemed to be an extremely large and conspicuous minority among theological librarians; 2) many libraries seemed to have only one professional, who in turn seemed to be more like the faculty than like the rest of the library staff; 3) historically the theological library tended to be the province of a professor, who would oversee the operations of a small clerical staff.

The second hypothesis was that characteristics of faculty status tend to accompany a librarian's possession of the traditional qualifications for teaching faculty. This idea arose from: 1) the need and/or attempts on the part of other academic librarians to show that they engage in the teaching process, for example; 2) the reasons typically given as a basis for denying or limiting faculty status among librarians ("they do not teach, do research, etc."); 3) the relatively undeveloped situation among theological librarians regarding the issue of

faculty status (refined and duly accepted equivalencies to traditional faculty qualifications would not be expected); and 4) the current enjoyment of faculty benefits by many if not all theological librarians who have faculty-like credentials.

Besides testing these two major hypotheses, it was at the same time natural and desirable to turn up information about several conjectures which accompanied the hypotheses, but upon which the hypotheses were not dependent. The first conjecture was that a serious discrepancy exists between head librarians and other librarians because only head librarians seem to possess the faculty status which their credentials merit. A related conjecture was that assistant librarians are especially subject to discrimination, because they tend to be better qualified than most of the "other" librarians. Another conjecture was that the M.L.S. degree in combination with one or more subject master's would appear frequently as a qualification. For librarians this combination tends to be viewed as an appropriate substitute for the doctorate, and the findings with regard to this combination were keenly anticipated. Among the traditional qualifications for faculty status, it was felt that the teaching of courses would be least frequent among all of the librarians. Generally, the librarians were expected to make a decent showing as far as qualifications were concerned, however. On the other hand, none of the characteristics of faculty status were expected to be prevalent, except among head librarians.

Some Statements on Methodology and Some General Findings

The total universe of theological librarianship in the United States is small enough that a census might have been possible.[1] However, statistical significance proved attainable through a two-page questionnaire mailed to 137 theological libraries.[2] This sample was determined on the basis of the ATLA's institutional membership roster as it appeared in January 1978. The Association represents almost all of the libraries at accredited theological seminaries in the United States. Besides some of the Canadian seminary libraries, the only ATLA member institutions not receiving a questionnaire were those few located at historical societies or other such places. A word of caution is in order, however, because librarians constituted the unit of analysis, but the questionnaires went to libraries and were addressed specifically to the head librarians. Although other librarians in many cases may have had direct input or even filled out the questionnaires on their own, the awareness and opinions of the head librarians undoubtedly are reflected the most heavily.

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[1] Such a census of course presents its own problems for statistical analysis, e.g. rational delineation of parameters is not possible, contamination-free sampling of a series of subsets is not feasible, etc.

[2] There are inherent in such a questionnaire two sources of skewing which are not indicated here or elsewhere in the paper: 1) inasmuch as not all of the questionnaires were returned a subuniverse resulted which was not chosen rationally; and 2) in spite of the gratifying rate of return the total population was of course small enough that an unavoidable margin of error existed.

The rate of response was a gratifying 69% (94 responses), but the data from only 87 questionnaires could be processed, owing to incompleteness and similar factors. This still allowed for a statistically significant sample of 64% of the 137 institutions. Data were processed on a total number of 216 librarians. Presumably these librarians represent over 60% of all theological librarians, because libraries with small staffs did not provide a disproportionately larger number of responses. As far as the individual librarian's situation is concerned, the mean staff size is 3.2, the median is 2.9, and the mode is 3. However, 25% of the libraries have only 1 professional, 32% have 2, and 24% have 3, with the remainder scattered between staff sizes of 4 through 8.

Fourteen nominal-level variables were used to operationalize the concept of being qualified for faculty status. Each variable consisted of a "yes" or "no" response regarding possession of a given qualification. The qualifications appeared on the questionnaire as follows: 1) Ph.D. or equivalent; 2) Enrolled in Ph.D. program; 3) M.L.S.; 4) Master's degree(s) other than library science; 5) Enrolled in a master's program; 6) Teaches courses (credit or non-credit); 7) Gives lectures, presents papers, etc.; 8) Serves on professional committees, organizes workshops, etc.; 9) Engages in research; 10) Has published; 11) Ordained; 12) Other (please specify . . .). The two additional variables were constructed by combining the M.L.S. first with the doctorate and then with the subject master's degree(s). The computer program SPSS (Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences) was used to process these and all other responses. Crosstabulations, counts, and "if" commands were used to yield additional data. In the case of these qualifications, some variables were left aside because they turned out to be of marginal value to the project. Too few people were enrolled in degree programs for those variables to mean much, especially because no clear pattern emerged among those so enrolled. Ordination was omitted because, although of interest, it is not a typical or uniformly applicable qualification for faculty status. Ordination did tend to accompany other qualifications, so that a less qualified librarian was less likely to be ordained. "Other" qualifications than those enumerated were both rare and negligible, and thus that variable also was left aside in the early stages of analyzing results.

Eight "core" variables and seven ancillary variables were used to operationalize the concept of having faculty status. These variables also were nominal-level ones, and what has been said about the first fourteen variables similarly applies to this set of variables. The eight "core" variables were: 1) Promotion on a basis essentially the same as that for non-library faculty at your institution; 2) Tenure on a basis essentially the same as . . . ; 3) Compensation equivalent to . . . , including fringe benefits . . . but not discrepancies due to longer recesses; 4) Sabbaticals or equivalent (study) leaves of absence; 5) Research funds made available (from the institution or with its assistance); 6) Eligibility to attend

faculty meetings and other meetings open to faculty; 7) Eligibility to vote at faculty meetings; 8) Eligibility to participate in the governance of the institution (e.g. eligibility for full, voting membership on faculty committees). The seven other variables involved a "yes" or "no" response to possession of select combinations of these first eight. However, the only two of these "select combination" variables which proved meaningful were those showing that all eight characteristics were possessed or none of them.

Intimately related to faculty status is of course faculty rank, and one ordinal-level variable measured this characteristic very directly. Librarians were to indicate which of the four ranks they held, if any, regardless of precise terms used. Those who indicated no rank were considered to have none, except that some commented (in space provided) that they did have faculty "status" without rank. These were categorized accordingly for purposes of analysis.

Besides the thirty variables already discussed, nine others rounded out the attempt to operationalize the entire plan of the project. An interval/ratio variable was implied earlier in the discussion of staff size. Then there was a somewhat esoteric variable denominated "school type." A series of numbers 1 through 5 simply indicated whether the library was essentially independent or was part of a larger system or cluster of one kind or another. Over 75% were independent and the variable played little or no role in the project.

A variable which played perhaps the leading role in the project was that indicating position: head, assistant, or "other." Some respondents specified "cataloguer," "reference librarian," etc., but this kind of further refinement on a project-wide scale proved to be neither necessary nor possible. Another important variable was that through which the enumerated characteristics of faculty status were determined to be essentially the same as those enjoyed by teaching faculty at the various institutions. Although some respondents apparently misconstrued the question, 90% affirmed that the characteristics were essentially the same.

The remaining five variables further operationalized the minor though essential aspect of ascertaining the place of the library vis-à-vis the institution. One nominal-level variable was designed to indicate whether the librarians constituted a faculty or department like others at the institution. Two-thirds replied "no." Of the other third a few specified "not applicable" and one failed to respond, but most indicated "yes." The significance of these affirmative responses is questionable, however, in view of the substantive findings regarding discrepancies between librarians on the same staff. Moreover, the "yes" responses once again reflect the "weight" of the two largest professional staffs (7 and 8 professionals, respectively). The small number of variables relating to the institution of course were answered the same for all of the librarians at each institution, so the resulting

averages of course relate to individuals rather than to libraries, as indicated earlier. With regard to the librarians constituting a faculty, however, a surprising 23% of those who were the sole professionals at their libraries responded "yes," and a higher percent (40%) responded "yes" at libraries with three professionals than at smaller or larger libraries, except for the two largest. This, too, may indicate that this variable is suspect.

Another questionable variable is that pertaining to mechanisms for interaction between non-faculty library personnel and the institution's scholarly and administrative structures. Over 50% of the librarians indicated either that no such mechanisms exist or that the mechanisms are not clearly discernible. About 12% specified "informal" and the remainder indicated interaction took place through the library committee, through the head librarian, etc.

The last three of these "institution-related" variables comprised percentages of teaching faculty possessing the doctorate, enrolled in a doctoral program, and having ordination, respectively. The first of these has the greatest significance and contrasts with the much smaller percentage of librarians who have doctorates--a figure which will receive more attention a little later. Only 7% of the librarians reported teaching faculties of which less than 25% had doctorates. Only 22% of the librarians were at schools where 50% or less teaching faculty had the doctorate. Amazingly, over half of the librarians were at schools with a teaching faculty on which

at least 80% possessed a Ph.D. or equivalent. Only 4% of the librarians said none of the teaching faculty had doctorates, but 15% said all of their teaching faculty did. Demanding a percentage, the question yielded results which are suspicious because of the likelihood of rough estimations. Nevertheless, 33 individual percentiles were registered out of a possible total of not 100 but rather 87.

As far as faculty enrollment in doctoral programs was concerned, 38% of the librarians said none of the teaching faculty were enrolled, and 75% reported an enrollment of 10% or less. These figures compare with an enrollment of 7% of the librarians in doctoral programs. Ordination among librarians compares less favorably because 31% of the librarians said they were ordained, but around 50% of them reported teaching faculties with 90% or more ordained.

The findings concerning some of these less significant variables were best gotten out of the way before presentation and analysis of the most important findings. One or two more comments are in order at this point. Certainly worth noting is the virtual absence of "no response," particularly in connection with the more significant variables which related to qualifications and characteristics of faculty status. The rate and caliber of response is attributable to the competence and cooperative spirit of respondents rather than to incentives or to the quality of the questionnaire. Hopefully the specific findings reflect the same care and concern that the general response does.

POSITIONS BY
DEGREES HELD
(Percentages)

	Doctorate	Subj. Master's (only)	M.L.S. and Subj. Master's	M.L.S. (only)	No Graduate Degrees
All Librarians (216)	12	8	33	36	11
Head Librarians (86)	24	4	48	21	3
Assistant Librarians (31)	3	3	36	42	16
Other Librarians (99)	4	12	23	46	15
Ass't/Other Librarians (Together) (130)	4	10	26	45	15

POSITIONS BY
QUALIFICATIONS
(Percentages)

	Classroom Teaching	Lectures, Papers, etc.	Professional Committee Work, etc.	Research	Publishing
All Librarians (216)	34	28	47	27	28
Head Librarians (86)	57	47	67	40	50
Assistant Librarians (31)	31	10	42	19	16
Other Librarians (99)	16	17	31	19	13
Ass't/Other Librarians (Together) (130)	19	15	34	19	14

POSITIONS BY
CHARACTERISTICS OF FACULTY STATUS
(Percentages)

	Promotion	Tenure	Compensation	Leaves	Research Funds	Meetings (Attend)	Meetings (Vote)	Faculty Committee Membership, etc.	All Characteristics	None of the Characteristics
All Librarians (216)	50	38	57	37	31	58	49	51	15	18
Head Librarians (86)	72	63	81	66	52	98	93	92	33	1
Assistant Librarians (31)	42	23	42	19	19	42	32	32	3	23
Other Librarians (99)	33	20	40	16	16	28	16	21	4	31
Ass't./Other Librarians (Together) (130)	35	21	41	17	17	32	20	24	4	29

POSITIONS BY
RANK/STATUS HELD
(Percentages)

	Faculty Rank	Status Without Rank	No Faculty Rank or Status
All Librarians (216)	43	10	47
Head Librarians (86)	77	11.5	11.5
Assistant Librarians (31)	29	10	61
Other Librarians (99)	18	9	73
Ass't./Other Librarians (Together) (130	21	9	70

DEGREES BY
RANK/STATUS HELD
(Percentages)

	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Instructor	Status Without Rank	No Faculty Status
Doctorate	19	50	15	4	4	8
M.L.S. and Subj. Master's	17	17	11	7	13	36
M.L.S. (only)	7	4	13	8	12	58
No Graduate Degree	9	0	9	0	9	74

DEGREES BY
CHARACTERISTICS OF FACULTY STATUS
(Percentages)

	Promotion	Tenure	Compensation	Leaves	Research Funds	Meetings (Attend)	Meetings (Vote)	Faculty Committee Membership, etc.	All Characteristics	None of the Characteristics
Doctorate	89	77	96	66	62	89	89	85	42	4
M.L.S. and Subj. Master's	58	47	63	52	40	74	65	67	22	11
M.L.S. (only)	38	25	55	27	23	47	35	39	7	19
No Graduate Degree	26	9	17	9	4	26	22	22	4	52

Substantive Findings

The findings confirm the hypothesis concerning the dominance of head librarians. In terms of degrees held, head librarians are far out in front. About 25% of them possess the doctorate compared to 4% for the other librarians. It should be noted at this point that only 13% of all librarians have doctorates, which compares unfavorably with the reported percentages of teaching faculty holding the doctorate. About half of the head librarians hold the M.L.S. and at least one subject master's, which means that almost 75% of them are degree-qualified for faculty status.[5] Among the other librarians, however, only 30% would be degree-qualified.

In terms of other qualifications besides degrees, head librarians emerge at the forefront again. Over half of them do some teaching and exactly one-half have published. This compares with less than 1 in 5 among other librarians. The two groups compare most favorably in the areas of professional committee work and research, although the percentages for head librarians are still double those for the others.

The same general picture holds for characteristics of faculty status. Almost 80% of the head librarians reported faculty rank and another 12% reported a "status" in lieu of rank. Only 30% of the other librarians reported either rank or status. Promotion, compensation, and eligibility to attend

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[5]It is fair to say that the M.L.S. with a subject master's is considered for librarians an appropriate substitute for the doctorate. This seems generally true not only among librarians, but also among administrators, accrediting agencies, etc.

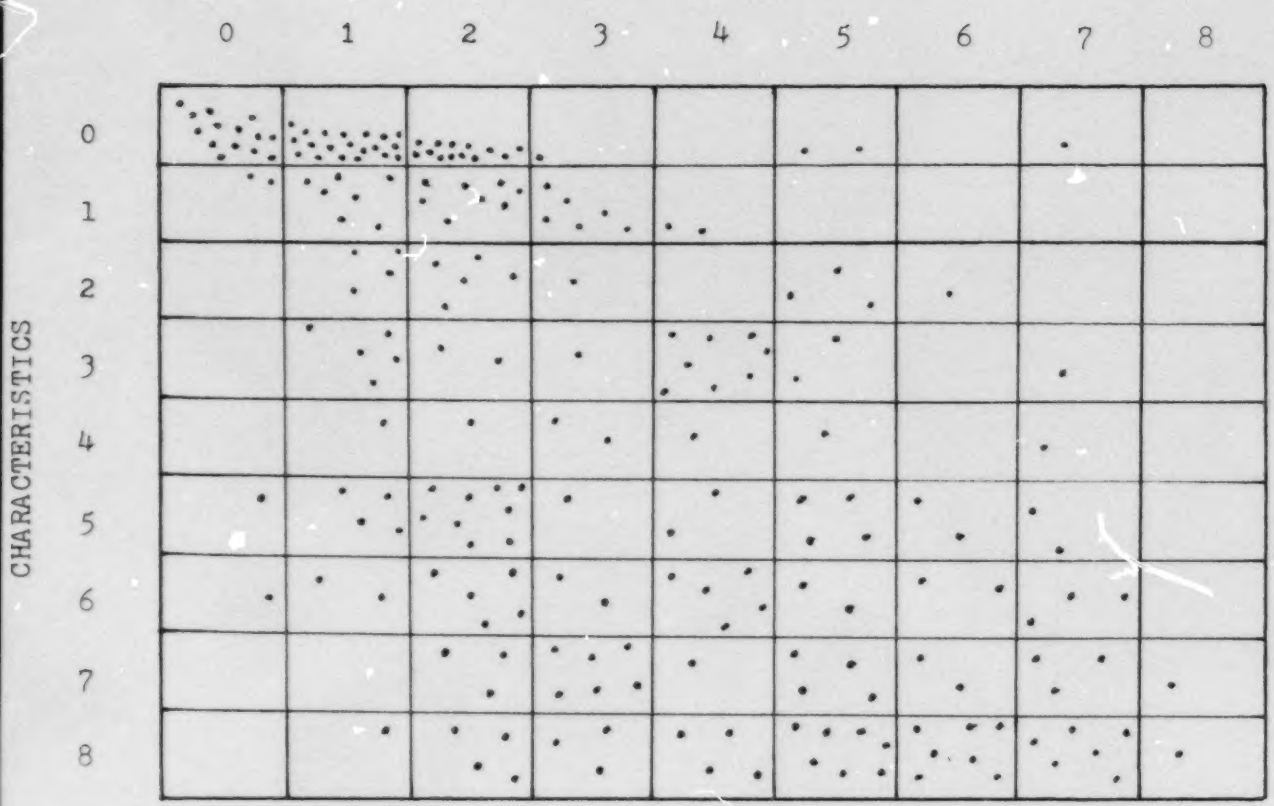
(but not vote at) faculty meetings are the most commonly enjoyed characteristics among those who are not head librarians. Yet no more than about 40% enjoyed any one of these characteristics. About 30% had none of the characteristics. Among head librarians, on the other hand, over 30% enjoyed all of the characteristics, and not a single characteristic was possessed by less than 52% of the head librarians.

In view of these findings, confirmation of the second hypothesis is not surprising. The characteristics do indeed tend to accompany the qualifications. And it would seem safe to conclude that a relationship of dependence obtains. Dependence of course is not demonstrated by the raw data, which indicate nothing more than association. Nevertheless, some statements about dependence seem justified by knowledge of requirements for faculty status and occasional written responses about the necessary and sufficient conditions for such status at given institutions.

The scattergram and crosstabulation which are on following pages show the association between the two comprehensive interval/ratio variables of "characteristics" (dependent) and "qualifications" (independent) which were constructed out of the respective series of nominal variables. Obviously the nominal variables are not identical in significance, but for purposes of correlation they can be treated satisfactorily as units of equal "weight" and cumulative force. The best statistical measure of this correlation is probably Pearson's r. In this case Pearson's r is 0.58944 (significance = 0.0000),

indicating a modest but significant degree of correlation. Eta is 0.60883 with characteristics dependent (0.60336 with qualifications dependent), so the category means do not fall along a simple straight line, but the difference between Pearson's r and Eta seems not so great as to indicate a highly curved nature of association.

Although the research was not directed at the conjectures accompanying the hypotheses, the findings definitely relate to these conjectures. For example, although a discrepancy does exist between head librarians and other librarians, the number of deserving librarians denied faculty characteristics seems too small to have a serious effect upon the correlation just demonstrated. Moreover, assistant librarians as a group do not seem to suffer special discrimination. They do more teaching and professional committee work than other librarians, and they possess a higher percentage of multiple master's degrees. But on the other hand, they tend to enjoy more faculty characteristics, especially in the areas of promotion, and both attendance and voting at faculty meetings. Individual assistant librarians may well be failing to receive the tenure, leave, and particularly the compensation, that their credentials and their faculty involvement would indicate they deserve.



Scattergram of
Characteristics
by Qualifications

CHARACTERISTICS	QUALIFICATIONS								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0	14	20	13	1	0	2	0	1	0
1	2	7	8	6	2	0	0	0	0
2	0	4	5	1	0	3	1	0	0
3	0	5	2	1	8	2	0	1	0
4	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	0
5	1	4	9	1	2	4	2	2	0
6	1	2	5	2	5	2	2	3	0
7	0	0	3	6	1	4	2	3	1
8	0	1	4	3	4	7	7	6	1

Crosstabulation of Characteristics by Qualifications

Conclusions/Implications

The findings of this project pose serious problems for the efforts to secure faculty status for theological librarians. If the ATLA secures a more uniform interpretation of required qualifications for theological librarianship, many professionals in these libraries may find themselves underqualified. If only "qualified professional librarians" are to be considered full members of theological faculties, one might reply that, generally speaking, such librarians already are full members. Would the discrepancy between head librarians and other librarians really be changed by pressing the faculty status issue? On the other hand, if the "uniform interpretation" of qualifications be loosened and lowered, could the faculty status issue be pressed with any hope of success? These and other questions have broad implications for the current work of the ATLA's Committee on Standards of Accreditation.